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20 February 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Deputy Director (Research)

SUBJECT : Status Report on CIA Air Activities for the Period  
14 through 20 February 1963

This memorandum is for information only and contains a status report on Agency Air Activities undertaken during the subject period in implementation of Special Group approvals:

PROJECT IDEALIST (U-2)

a. IDEALIST/TACKLE: Four TACKLE missions were approved by the Special Group on 31 January 1963; the highest priority of the four remains that to the Szechwan Basin. It has been planned to consolidate two of the approvals, namely that of the sortie to Pautou and a second for Shuang-Cheng-Tzu MTR in Lan-Chou into a single mission to be staged from [redacted] as approved by the Special Group 15 February. The requirement for a second sortie will be determined after evaluation of the take on this consolidated mission. During the subject period negotiations were commenced with the [redacted] and the U. S. Ambassador [redacted] leading toward the proposed staging (Operation [redacted]). A survey team is currently in place in [redacted] on this matter. No formal response has been received from Ambassador [redacted] concurrence as yet. Weather briefings were held daily for possible TACKLE missions throughout China, and forecast weather was below minimum acceptable standards for satisfactory photographic coverage on each day.

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b. IDEALIST [redacted] One sortie was approved for February, including permission to transit Laos south of 18° north latitude en route to

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25X1A and from North Vietnam from the [ ] base at [ ] This 25X1C  
Mission was originally approved by the Special Group on 17 January 1963  
and reapproved for February on 31 January. Weather briefings were held  
daily during the subject period with the same unfavorable result as that  
stated for the China Mainland above.

25X1A c. IDEALIST/[ ] One [ ] mission was approved for 25X1A  
February by the Special Group against targets in the Sino-Indian border.  
On 15 February COMOR stated that there are no outstanding current intel-  
ligence requirements in the area in question. It has, therefore, not been  
necessary to conduct daily weather briefings for the Sino-Indian border area.

25X1A This fact coupled with the continued bad weather in North Vietnam, the  
requirement to return the [ ] aircraft for overhaul, as well as our  
ability to transfer the North Vietnam coverage requirement to the TACKLE  
detachment, which prompts us to propose the immediate withdrawal of the

25X1A [ ] unit from [ ] While it does not seem to us necessary to 25X1C  
request a formal Special Group approval of this withdrawal, you may wish  
to advise them of our stated intent to do so.

25X1A PROJECT [ ]

25X1A [ ] Missions: Three missions were approved 31 January  
for the month of February. Operational considerations reduced the intended  
25X1A number of [ ] flights to two, the first of which was attempted on  
19 February and the second which is being presented to the Special Group  
25X1A 21 February for approval of the North Korea overflight portion of the mission  
and the [ ] 25X1C

25X1C [ ]. The 19 February flight (TE-69-161) aborted approximately sixteen  
minutes after reaching its coast in point due to the belief that the aircraft  
had been hit by AAA fire. Post-mission examination revealed no damage to  
the aircraft. The probable cause of AAA fire is suspected as being one of  
the following: (a) the mission aircraft was off course, or (b) the route may  
have inadvertently crossed a temporary unplotted AAA site.

#### PROJECT CORONA

a. CORONA Missions: One CORONA mission was approved for  
February and is currently scheduled to launch 22 February at 2100Z hours.

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This will be the first CORONA mission employing the so-called Thrust-Augmented Thor Vehicle employing three piggy-back Blue Scout solid fuel missiles as a package with the Thor booster.

b. CORONA/LANYARD Missions: One CORONA/LANYARD mission was approved for February, also utilizing the Thrust-Augmented Thor booster. At present it appears that this mission will not be executed in February, since the payload system has not completed its tests in the thermal and altitude simulator chamber. This is due to several malfunctions in the test chamber and/or payload system. Earliest launch forecast for the first CORONA/LANYARD mission is not prior to 12 March 1963.

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
Deputy Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

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